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TREC and TALCB 5% Budget Reduction Brings Changes

Agency staff, licensees, and the public will all be affected by necessary changes to meet the required 5% budget reduction from state leadership- most notably the disconnection of the toll-free telephone lines

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In meetings last week, members of the Texas Real Estate Commission (TREC) and the Texas Appraiser Licensing & Certification Board (TALCB) both approved the agency's 5% budget reduction plan as presented by agency staff. The plan includes a 15-point list of budget reductions, all of which are necessary to meet the cutback as requested by state leadership due to projected revenue shortfalls across state government. Reductions include:

- (1) Planned building remodel eliminated
- (2) Planned bandwidth increase eliminated
- (3) Furniture/equipment for unfilled staff positions eliminated
- (4) Information network "Controlled Penetration Study" eliminated
- (5) New and renewal licenses to be delivered electronically
- (6) License renewal notices to be delivered electronically
- (7) Additional miscellaneous postage reduction
- (8) Complaint status letters to be delivered electronically
- (9) Contract computer programmer salary eliminated
- (10) Information & Technology Services staff training eliminated
- (11) Computer equipment refresh schedule reduced
- (12) Agency travel funds reduced
- (13) Salary lapses dues to staff turnover
- (14) Salary savings from reduction in staff
- (15) Toll-free telephone lines eliminated

Three items are anticipated to be of most impact to agency stakeholders. Numbers 5 and 6 are already being implemented in carefully tested stages, with technical success and glowing reviews, as the agency continues to push forward its paperless services agenda.

Number 15 will be a change for licensees, especially those who have had the 1-800 numbers memorized or programmed into their telephones for years. The toll free telephone lines will be disconnected on Friday, **June 4, 2010**. Please use **512-459-6544** to contact TREC and **512-459-2232** to contact TALCB. Or, the agency can also be contacted via email at **information@trec.state.tx.us** and **information@talcb.state.tx.us**, respectively. While the impacts of any budget reduction are always tough, the agency underwent a careful review to determine specific ways to meet the reduction requirement without jeopardizing core services to license holders and the general public. The widely popular use of mobile phones will greatly reduce the impact of this change for most users.

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